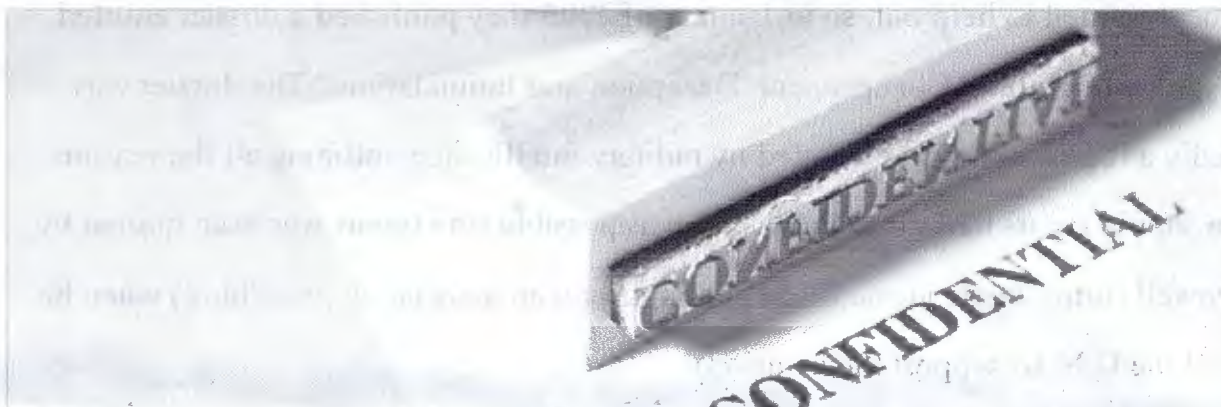


5

Word Document Reveals That the Iraq Invasion Was Based on Plagiarized College Essays



Getty

Every Microsoft Word document you create contains a hidden log of everything you did to it, ever. Specifically, it contains a revision history showing who touched the document, and when. You'd think this would be the sort of thing military intelligence would care about when creating sensitive, world-changing documents, but you'd be wrong.



Getty

"Now replace 'No Evidence of WMDs' with 'Bulging titloads of WMDs, you guys.'"

Exh. 2

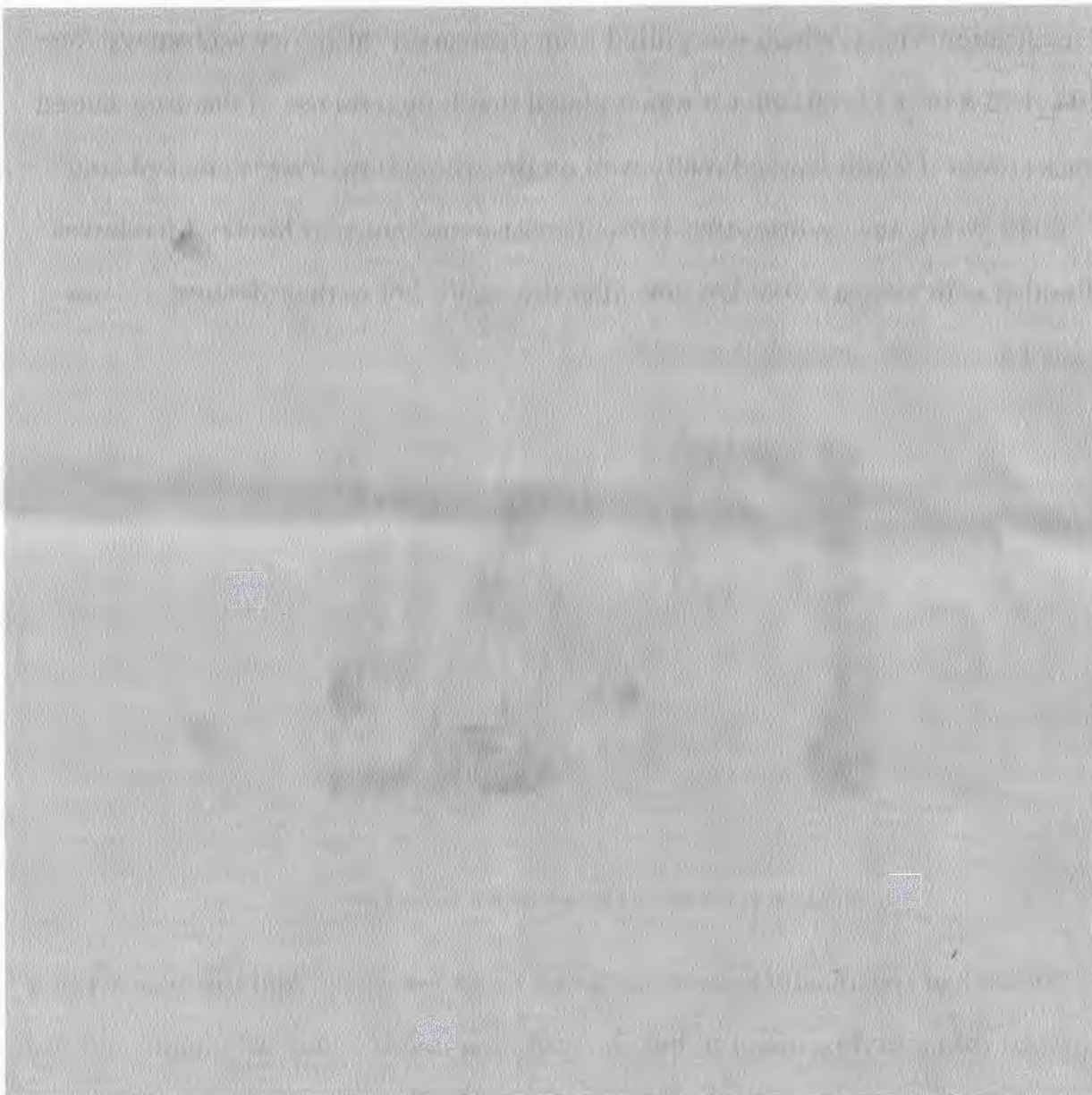
So flash back to the early 2000s, when America was largely focused on two things -- the invasion of Iraq and justifying the invasion of Iraq, more or less in that order. The British government wanted to help out, so in January of 2003 they published a dossier entitled "Iraq: Its Infrastructure of Concealment, Deception and Intimidation." The dossier was supposedly a top-level report compiled by military intelligence outlining all the reasons America should get its tanks into Iraq as soon as possible (the report was even quoted by Colin Powell (http://meria.idc.ac.il/scrapbookplagiarism/associated_press.html) when he addressed the U.N. to support the invasion).

The problems with the report, which would later become known as "the dodgy dossier" despite its complete inability to dodge anything other than basic computer literacy, began when the government made the mistake of posting it online in its original Word document format. That meant its revision history (http://books.google.ca/books?id=mJIKOKz0JAIC&pg=PA62&dq=metadata+dodgy+dossier&hl=en&ei=Od1vTcGYHcHegQe32qVH&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CCwQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=metadata%20dodgy%20dossier&f=false) was visible to anyone who knew where to look:

```
Rev. #1: "cic22" edited file "C:\DOCUME~1\pham\LOCALS~1\Temp\AutoRecovery save of Iraq - security.doc"
Rev. #2: "cic22" edited file "C:\DOCUME~1\pham\LOCALS~1\Temp\AutoRecovery save of Iraq - security.doc"
Rev. #3: "cic22" edited file "C:\DOCUME~1\pham\LOCALS~1\Temp\AutoRecovery save of Iraq - security.doc"
Rev. #4: "JPratt" edited file "C:\TEMP\Iraq - security.doc"
Rev. #5: "JPratt" edited file "A:\Iraq - security.doc"
Rev. #6: "ablackshaw" edited file "C:\ABlackshaw\Iraq - security.doc"
Rev. #7: "ablackshaw" edited file "C:\ABlackshaw\A:\Iraq - security.doc"
Rev. #8: "ablackshaw" edited file "A:\Iraq - security.doc"
Rev. #9: "MKhan" edited file "C:\TEMP\Iraq - security.doc"
Rev. #10: "MKhan" edited file "C:\WINNT\Profiles\mkhan\Desktop\Iraq.doc"
```

Via Information Risk and Security (http://books.google.ca/books?id=mJIKOKz0JAIC&pg=PA62&dq=metadata+dodgy+dossier&hl=en&ei=Od1vTcGYHcHegQe32qVH&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CCwQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=metadata%20dodgy%20dossier&f=false)

"Mnats licked file ..."



Getty

In addition to keeping track of who touched a document (as in the Iraq case above), Word documents also keep track of the editing changes made. What, you thought that deleting a sentence from a document before emailing it to everyone caused it to vanish from the universe? Better hope you've never changed your mind about what you wanted to say halfway through a work memo ...

Which brings us to Merck & Co., the pharmaceutical company most famous for the

arthritis medication Vioxx, which was pulled from the market (http://www.cbsnews.com/2100-204_162-646552.html) after it was revealed that long term use of the drug caused heart attacks (even if it still worked really well on the whole (http://www.cracked.com/article_20048_5-big-news-stories-that-left-out-most-important-part.html)). Merck was swiftly flooded with almost 7,000 lawsuits after the recall, but in their defense, it's not like anyone knew Vioxx would kill people.



Getty

"Now if you have a heart attack and die, whose fault is it? That's right, yours."

Actually, Merck had specifically known *that exact thing for years*. And the bizarre thing is, they *almost* told everyone about it, but changed their minds at the last minute and then poorly covered up their tracks. Thanks, again, to their Word document's revision history.

Five years before Vioxx got recalled, Merck had run a clinical study of the drug (http://www.forbes.com/2005/12/08/merck-vioxx-lawsuits_cx_mh_1208vioxx.html) in *The New England Journal of Medicine*. After Vioxx was pulled, the editors of *The New England Journal* went back to the original file of the study Merck had sent to them and checked the editing history. Sure enough, they discovered a table that had been deleted from the study two days before Merck submitted the final draft -- a table called "Cardiovascular Events."